



KOOTENAI

JSEC Minutes

Tuesday, March 8, 2005

ATTENDING:

Chris Erickson – City of Libby, Pat Pezzelle, Andrea Wandler, Debbie Huisenruit – Lincoln County Campus, Jamie Brebner-Homesteaders Ranch & Feed, Linda Leyba, Joe Leyba-Beck's MT Cafe, Louise Hopkins- St. Johns Lutheran Hospital, Debi Davidson – KRDC, Russell Barnes – Lincoln County Title, Pam Rhodes – Achievements, Cindy Jensen-Western Montana Mental Health Center, Jean Pittsley-PCWA, Linda Gerard-Venture Inn, David Friedman-Plum Creek, Sandy Romey-Opportunity Resources, Debbie Edwards, Kandis Peterson-Libby Care Center, Alana Mesenbrink-US Army Corps of Engineers, Roger Morris-Western News, Mike Shoquist, Patti McCubbins-Flathead Job Service, Kari Martell, Johnette Watkins – Kootenai Job Service.

CALLED TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Chris Erickson

FEBRUARY MINUTES – Approved

TREASURER REPORT – \$699.07 savings, checking account balance of \$259.93

MISSION STATEMENT & BYLAWS – Pat Pezzelle presented a draft of the By-Laws for Kootenai JSEC as prepared by the committee. Pat stated that the committee compiled the By-Laws using excerpts from By-Laws currently in use by other JSEC's throughout the state. Pat feels that the Kootenai JSEC should be open to all business people. He noted that some JSEC's limit membership to certain percentages of members who represent public and private sector business. Mike Shoquist stated that he would encourage the membership to include and recruit businesses from both Troy and Eureka. Please review for any suggested changes. There will be a motion to accept at the next meeting.

JSEC SEMINAR: Chris announced the upcoming Behavioral Interviewing seminar to be presented by FVCC Human Resource Director, Warren Tolley, on Wednesday, March 30th from 8:00 a.m. to Noon. This in-depth seminar is an excellent opportunity for businesses who want to learn to hire the right employee the first time. Turnover is very expensive and can be minimized with educated hiring practices. Those interested in attending should register no later than March 28th since Warren would like a head count prior to the seminar.

JOB FAIR/HEALTH CAREER EXPLORATION

The Job Fair and Health Career Fair was very successful. 25 employers participated and approximately 200 people attended. We have received many positive comments. Survey responses were good, for the most part. In previous years, the fair was strictly a Youth Job Fair for students to receive interview practice while applying for actual jobs with local businesses. This year the fair was open to anyone over the age of 16. In addition to a good turnout of high school students, attendees included college students and other adults in the community. Most of the employers seemed to think this was a positive change. The majority of the suggestions for next year requested a larger space and a shorter, earlier time frame. Several respondents also suggested that a Job Fair and a Career Fair should be two separate events.

Kandis Peterson noted that since the Job Fair is also an educational event for Job Seekers, it would be nice to have a separate room with supplies such as phone books, etc. where applicants could complete applications and gather work experience and reference information. It would be good to have someone stationed in the room to assist and answer questions from applicants.

Andrea Wandler stated that she interviewed several excellent applicants whom she intends to hire for her business. This comment was heard from several employers.

Johnette brought up the possibility of charging employers a minimal fee to have a table at the Job Fair making this a JSEC fund raising event. This would also serve to formalize the employer's registration somewhat and instill the value of the opportunity. This can be something to take into consideration for next year.

FEATURED EMPLOYER-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Libby Dam Project

GUEST SPEAKER-ALANA MESENBRINK

Alana gave an excellent presentation on Tourism in Lincoln County and the history of the relatively new Lincoln County Tourism Coalition. Alana is a Park Ranger at the dam and came to Libby about four years ago. Alana stated that she intends to stay here forever. Alana has been with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 10 years and her job at Libby Dam deals with Tourism and the summer student positions.

In 2003, various people and agencies participated in a project called "Connect the Dots", which attempted to bring some cohesiveness to the numerous community agencies with so many different acronyms. From this group, spur groups formed for a variety of purposes, such as the community gateway signage project now coming to fruition.

Recently, it was determined that the group needed to have a more formal structure, as well as a source of funding. The county commissioners granted some seed money to the project and the Lincoln County Tourism Coalition was formed with a mission to promote smart tourism in Lincoln County and to educate the public and businesses about tourism. At the meeting on February 24th, an interim board of directors was formed, the process of obtaining 501c3 tax status was begun and By-Laws are being developed. Anyone interested in Tourism is invited to attend the meetings. The next meeting is on April 5, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. at Koocanusa Resort

LCTC Current projects and goals include:

Gateway Sign Project (nearing completion)

Themed Way-Finding Signs & Kiosks – These would be low cost signs with a consistent theme marking and directing people to the area's 12 main attractions. These signs are one by three feet in dimension. Tourism is more than signage, however, and smart tourism will be needed to expand.

Coalition building

Marketing for tourism development

Fundraising - Currently seeking funding through grants, donations, etc. One fundraising project currently in the works is an 18- Month Community Event Calendar listing events and sights using paid sponsorships and ads. "Day" ads are \$30/Day – Can be pictures and/or words. This calendar will be on the shelves by May. Local groups may also purchase at \$15.00 each and use to raise funds for their own groups.

Some Statistics:

- 2 Billion dollars spent by tourists in Montana in 2002
- 61% of people traveling through the state are on vacation
- the average income of these tourists is \$60,000
- 41% stop to shop
- 1 hour spent in town equals \$50 spent

Tourism and interest in Lincoln County is exploding. Tourism affects almost every business in some way. We need to plan now to have smart tourism and smart growth in our county. Tourism = Goods & Services = Economy. This includes hospitality, travel, recreation, shopping and services. We need to work together to educate the community about the importance of forming a county wide infrastructure.

Alana also talked about the summer student positions open at the dam. These include 4 Laborers, 5-7 Park Ranger/Tour Guides, 1 Park Ranger/Recreation and 1 Patrol Ranger. The Patrol Ranger is the only one open to non-students and will run May through November.

EFFECTS OF TOURISM

- Demographics indicate that people relocating to the area include a large number of retirees.
- This population is less of a crime problem and create a demand for services.
- Retired people have more disposable income.
- Studies from a small town in Arizona indicate that every four people who relocated to an area create one service industry job.
- Property prices here have increased dramatically.

Libby Care Center shared that many people who come to our area are looking for services available for their aging parents, as well. The Care Center is taking a proactive approach and finding creative ways to appeal to them.

Libby Care Center is promoting customer service and utilizing many of the principles from the *Give'em the Pickle!* video. They have incorporated the philosophy, "If you see someone doing something good, recognize them!" They are identifying their external and internal customers. They have implemented a "Welcome to the Neighborhood" program for residents making the transition to life at the care center. They strive to create a homelike environment and present new residents with a gift basket. They utilize a "Guardian Angel" program to help residents assimilate into their new living arrangement. They check-in with residents during the transition to assure their needs are being met.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Chris handed out the new USERRA posters required to be posted in businesses by March 10th. She also handed out revised regulations on Youth Employment.

IDEAS FOR UPCOMING JSEC MEETINGS

- Business Presentation/Facade
- New Employee Orientation
- Terminating an Employee
- Libby Revitalization, Inc.—Betty Jo Wood
- DISC Profiles— A behavior profiling system with an emphasis on understanding and team building in the workplace which strives to reduce interpersonal conflicts and focus on company goals and objectives. Warren Tolley is a facilitator of this system.

RAFFLE TICKETS:

The Montana State Employers' Council annual fundraiser raffle has begun. Prizes are a Sony Cyber-shot DSC-P93 Digital camera or 2 Round trip tickets on Big Sky Airlines good anywhere they fly. Chris, Kari and Johnette have tickets to sell - \$1 each or five for \$6. The drawing will be held at the annual MSEC convention on May 25th.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 12, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 pm at Beck's Montana Cafe

MEETING AJOURNED—